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SUBJECT: Same Question, Same Answer: Egypt Still Unwilling to Associate with the Copenhagen Accord

REF: 10 STATE 11182; 10 CAIRO 162

11. (SBU) Key Points:

--Egypt remains unwilling to associate with the Copenhagen Accord at this time and may not make a final decision about whether to do so until April 2010.

--According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Egypt's concerns about the accord include a lack of information about financing for the \$30 billion 2010-2012 fund and what organization will carry out verification measures for countries' promises to lower emissions

--Egypt has "reservations" about the African Union (AU)'s support for the accord and will make its decision independent from the AU.

12. (SBU) MFA First Secretary for Sustainable Development and Environmental Affairs Mohamed Nasr told ESTH officer on February 8 that Egypt remains unwilling to associate with the Copenhagen Accord at this time (Ref A). Noting that Egypt is "not necessarily opposed," Nasr explained that different government ministries continue to evaluate the accord. He explained that the National Committee on Climate Change - chaired by Environment Minister Maged George - and a technical group - led by Dr. Mostafa Tolba, a scientist and former director of the United Nations Environment Program - have met regularly to review the accord. He then reiterated Egyptian concerns about financing, emission commitments, and technology transfer mechanisms (Ref B).

13. (SBU) Nasr said the Egyptian government (GoE) is seeking information about financial commitments to assist developing countries reduce their emissions. It remains unclear when and to which countries the \$30 billion 2010-2012 fund will begin disbursing money. Nasr emphasized several times that Egypt is not seeking financing but consider this an important element of the accord that has not been sufficiently addressed. He stated that Annex I countries have not laid out when they will begin supporting the fund.

14. (SBU) Nasr expressed reservations about the reporting system for countries' pledges to lower emissions. He said that the accord fails to specify what organization will verify which countries are fulfilling their emission commitments and also does not address the issue of compliance. According to the GoE, there is nothing in the accord that will compel countries to report how they are lowering their commitments - this remains conditional and voluntary. Nasr noted several times during the meeting that the only legal document about climate change is the Kyoto Protocol (KP) and that Egypt would prefer to see it extended five years until 2017.

15. (SBU) In response to ESTH officer inquiry about the African Union (AU) endorsement of the accord, Nasr again pointed out the GoE's "reservations" and stated that Egypt will not be swayed by the AU and will make its decision independently. He said that representatives from the French and Canadian embassies had recently urged MFA officials to associate with the accord and that his

office had also explained Egypt's current "wait and see" position.

¶6. (SBU) Nasr said he did not expect a final decision about GoE support for the accord until "possibly April" but noted that this is ultimately a political decision and the timeframe may be moved up - possibly to March. He stated that any decision must have "political approval" from the MFA and that Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif will announce the GoE's position on the accord. If Egypt chooses to associate with the accord, "we will fully honor our obligations," he said.

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